

freedom, rebuild a wounded city, and care for our neighbors in need.

Today, America is confronting another disaster that has caused destruction and loss of life. This time the devastation resulted not from the malice of evil men but from the fury of water and wind.

Hurricane Katrina flattened entire towns along our gulf coast and left one of America's most storied cities under water. Tens of thousands have lost homes and loved ones and all their earthly possessions. The storm took countless lives and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee from their communities, with no assurance of returning soon.

Once more, our hearts ache for our fellow citizens, and many are left with questions about the future. Yet we are again being reminded that adversity brings out the best in the American spirit. In this time of great suffering, we have seen the courage and determination of rescue personnel who willingly risk their lives to save the lives of others. We have seen the spirit of America's armies of compassion who have rallied in response to this tragedy. Faith-based organizations and community groups and individual citizens across the country are caring for those affected by the storm and comforting those whose loved ones are lost or missing. Across our country, Americans are generously opening their homes and hearts to their brothers and sisters in need.

To find out how you can help, I urge you to visit usafreedomcorps.gov or call 1-877-USA-CORPS. The citizens of the gulf coast can count on their fellow Americans in this time of trial, and their Government is standing with them as well.

This week I signed legislation providing an additional \$52 billion for response and recovery efforts. We have already begun distributing \$2,000 in emergency relief to every displaced household, money they can use immediately for food, clothing, and other essentials. I have also called for all people from disaster areas to be granted special evacuee status, making it easier for them to collect Federal benefits like food stamps and Medicaid wherever they are in America.

We are assisting the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and we will help the people of the gulf coast recover from adversity. Despite all

they've endured, the people of that region are determined to rebuild their homes and reclaim their lives, and their fellow Americans are determined to help them. To accomplish the difficult work ahead of us, our Nation will call upon our vast resources and the ingenuity of our citizens, and these will be required in full measure.

Our greatest resource in such times is the compassionate character of the American people, because even the most destructive storm cannot weaken the heart and soul of our Nation. America will overcome this ordeal, and we will be stronger for it. Even in the deepest darkness, we can see the light of hope, and the light shows us the way forward. We will honor the memory of those we have lost. We will comfort the victims of Katrina, and we will make the gulf coast more vibrant than ever.

In all that lies before us, may God watch over the United States of America.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on September 9 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Memorandum on the 2005 Combined Federal Campaign

September 9, 2005

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive
Departments and Agencies*

Subject: 2005 Combined Federal Campaign

The Secretary of Transportation, Norman Y. Mineta, has agreed to serve as the Chair of the 2005 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area (CFC-NCA). I ask you to enthusiastically support the CFC by personally chairing the campaign in your agency and by encouraging top agency officials around the country to do the same.

The Combined Federal Campaign is an important way for Federal employees to support thousands of worthy charities. Public servants not only contribute to the campaign

but also assume leadership roles to ensure its success.

Your personal support and enthusiasm will help positively influence thousands of employees and will result in another successful campaign.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 12.

Remarks on the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and an Exchange With Reporters in New Orleans, Louisiana

September 12, 2005

The President. I want to thank the Governor for joining us today and thank the mayor for joining us. My impression of New Orleans is this, that there is a recovery on the way. There's progress being made, but there's a lot of serious and hard work that's yet to be done.

I was briefed today about the search and rescue that continues. I was also briefed about the different projects that are taking place. There's a containment of an oil spill. The electricity is beginning to be turned back on. The mayor is anxious, of course, to get parts of the city up and running, but he's also mindful that there's a lot of work to be done for that to happen.

General Honore and Admiral Allen briefed us as well about the close coordination between the Federal Government, State government, and local government, all aimed at solving problems. And we just came through an area that had had substantial water in it, and the dewatering is an indication that the city is moving forward. But I'll repeat, we got a lot of work to do, a whole lot of work to do. And my pledge again to the Governor and the mayor is, the Federal Government will work closely in coordination with their authorities.

You know, one of the things that the people are beginning to think about is the long-term revival of New Orleans, for example, or the surrounding parishes. My attitude is this: The people of New Orleans can design the vision; the people of New Orleans can

lay out what New Orleans ought to look like in the future; and the Federal Government will help. The people of Louisiana can lay out their vision of what Louisiana will look like, and the Federal Government can help. I think the best policy is one in which the Federal Government doesn't come down and say, "Here's what your city will look like." The best policy is one where the local folks say, "Here's what we want our city to look like, and let's work together to achieve that vision."

And so I—as we're beginning to get through this recovery phase and the rescue phase and the transitional phase—recovery phase—we're beginning to think through the—how to reconstitute this really important State as well as along the Mississippi coast, as well.

At any rate, again, I want to thank you all for being here. I appreciate you taking time out.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Yes.

Allegations of Racism

Q. Sir, what do you make of some of the comments that have been made by quite a number of people that there was a racial component to some of the people that were left behind and left without help?

The President. My attitude is this: The storm didn't discriminate, and neither will the recovery effort. When those Coast Guard choppers, many of whom were first on the scene, were pulling people off roofs, they didn't check the color of a person's skin. They wanted to save lives.

I can assure people from the—and I know from the State and local level as well that this recovery is going to be comprehensive. The rescue efforts were comprehensive, and the recovery will be comprehensive.

Learning From Relief Efforts

Q. Mr. President, does the Federal Government need the authority to come in earlier or even in advance of a storm that threatening?

The President. I think that's one of the interesting issues that Congress needs to take a look at. And it's really important that as we take a step back and learn lessons, that we are in a position to adequately answer